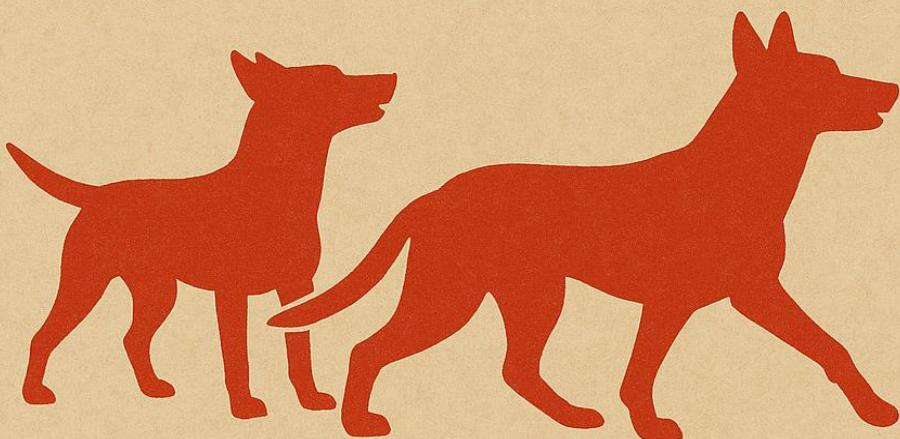


# GEORGE'S WITS or: THE FRENZY OF THE PROLETARIAT



## ALBA PRATALIA

# GEORGE'S WITS

or: *The Frenzy of the Proletariat*

By Alba Pratalia

George blew his last fuse.

A long-time intellectual and scholar, he had lived through too much—things that no philosophy, science, comedy, or drama could digest. The kind of experiences that make Kafka look like a children’s author and Camus a cheerful optimist.

His months had stopped including full weeks; one or two Thursdays regularly went missing, like unpaid interns in a budget cut. And his favorite company? Himself.

He was, technically, a social drinker. But he only drank with people he liked. He liked himself a lot.

So… cheers.

He often quoted James Stewart in *Harvey*:

“In this world, you can be oh, so smart, or oh, so pleasant. Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant.”

But George had updated the wisdom. Life had edited the script.

“I recommend blind drunk pleasant,” he would say now, raising his glass to no one in particular and everyone who wasn’t there.

It was less of a toast and more of a resignation letter to reality, signed with whiskey and a bitter grin.

So, just out of mere curiosity—purely scientific, mind you—to see what a morning looked like while sober, George bought an old bus. Not a school bus. Not a tourist coach. Something in between, possibly illegal in three counties and technically a fire hazard.

He had it rearranged somehow. There was some welding. Some cushions. Possibly an exorcism.

Now he drove the town's *Puppy Bus*.

Twice a day, he transported the good girls and good boys of town to and from puppy day care. Beagles, labs, mutts with credentials, poodles with superiority complexes. All barking, drooling, tail-thumping ambassadors of joy. Every four-legged, snorting angel was his best friend. And he was theirs.

George had found purpose. Not in philosophy. Not in teaching. But in screaming "WHO WANTS TO GO TO DAY CARE?" to a vehicle full of ecstatic barking maniacs.

And the answer was always yes. Always.

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### **Intermezzo 1, corto. Allegro**

There is no god. And still, this story is true.

Many, many eons ago—somewhere between the invention of loneliness and the first human hangover—something happened. Call it divine intervention. Call it cosmic pity. Call it the last act of a bored deity with a guilty conscience and too much wine in his system.

Eventually, God sent dogs to Earth to save humans from themselves. Not to preach, not to judge, just to sit, stay, wag, and love. The simplest form of grace, covered in fur and smelling faintly of biscuits and pond water.

But God, crafty bastard that He is (or was, or isn't), hid their wings. Folded them into muscle and fluff, tucked under skin and tail, wrapped in the illusion of mortality.

He didn't want to give away that they are angels.

Of course, George knew. He saw it every morning in the rearview mirror of the Puppy Bus—dozens of panting halos, slobbery saints with floppy ears and eyes that forgave everything. Even him.

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Of course, there was no doggy day care in town.

That was just George's cover story for the authorities, the gossips, and whatever remained of his frontal lobe.

In reality, he drove them to the bar.

Not just any bar. *The bar.* A creaky lakeside shack with a giant beer garden that simply ended—abruptly, gloriously—in the lake. No railing, no warning, just picnic tables sloping gently into the water like a Hemingway baptism.

Every day was beach day. And George forgave the world, one martini at a time. Olive in. Olive out. Depends on the mood. Some days he was

strict, some days he liked a little chaos in the glass.

Everybody knew. And nobody worried.

When drunk—and that was the default—George’s cruising speed in the Puppy Bus was a graceful  $\frac{1}{2}$  mph. Slow enough for squirrels to pass him. Once, the engine died when he hit a pothole the size of a political promise. They all sat there for an hour while George gave a heartfelt eulogy to the transmission and the dogs held a moment of solemn panting.

They spoke to each other.

Not in the sad, high-pitched whines humans mistake for neediness. Not in the barks that neighbors report as “nuisance.” No. George heard them for what they truly were:

Voices in chorus. Harmonized, unfiltered joy.

Sinatra, as interpreted by divine mutts.

To everyone else, it was just the usual cacophony of tails and teeth and slobber. But inside the Puppy Bus, it was musical theatre. It was the *chorus of angels* you'd get if Heaven had fleas and chewed shoes under the throne.

Each morning, as they coasted—½ mph, tipsy and holy—the dogs would sing to George:

*Come fly with me, let's fly, let's fly away  
If you can use some exotic booze, there's a bar  
in far Bombay*

*Come on and fly with me, let's fly, let's fly away*

George would tip his captain's hat (yes, he wore one), lift his martini glass just slightly off the steering wheel, and croon back:

*Come fly with me, let's float down to Peru  
In llama land, there's a one man band  
And he'll toot his flute for you...*

Come fly with me. Let's take off in the blue.

And they did. Every day. Not off the ground—  
George was far too drunk and the bus too  
tired—but off this world, off the rules, off the  
grief.

Up where only dogs and madmen dare to go.

Then, one day, two new dogs joined the Puppy  
Bus.

To the general public—it was just a couple  
more barks. Just two more tails in the wriggling  
orchestra. Noise, if you didn't know how to  
listen.

But George… George *listened*.

And what he heard was a new song. Not just new, ancient and eternal, yet fresh like the first time someone poured gin over ice.

The newcomers sat shoulder to shoulder on the front bench. As the others howled the daily anthem of “Fly Me to the Moon” and tail-thumped to the beat, these two crooned a different tune. Older. Wiser. Drunker.

*Out of the tree of life*

*I just picked me a plum*

*You came along*

*And everything started in to hum*

*Still it's a real good bet*

*The best is yet to come...*

George’s hand froze on the gearstick (neutral, always). His martini tilted dangerously.

His eyes misted, blurred by memory, gin, and dog dander. He pulled the handbrake, stood up

slowly—bus still crawling at sacred half-speed—and turned to them with arms wide open.

“Borges! Max! What are you two old mad waffles doing together? *And here?*”

They didn’t answer, of course. They just leapt into his arms.

They didn’t have to say a thing.

Because this was no coincidence. This was no adoption.

This was fate—wagging its tail, licking his nose, and humming Sinatra.

And immediately, George realized.

He looked up.

And there they were.

Álvaro Diderot and John Tiburty—leaning against a tree like Renaissance ghosts at a cocktail party, slightly glowing with afterlife smugness, or maybe just backlit by divine absurdity.

Each touched his head, flapped his arms, and tugged his ears.

Together they intoned:

**“Genius of the Restoration—”**

George didn’t miss a beat. He tugged his ears, flapped his arms, and touched his head in return:

**“—aid our own resuscitation!”**

They embraced like long-lost comrades from the War Against Sanity.

**“Tiburty! Diderot!”**

“George Belltower!”

“The world isn’t large enough to hide from you lunatics!” George cried.

“Madness is a magnet,” Tiburty shrugged, “attracts madness.”

“Boy, it’s fun to see you here again,” said George. “Diderot, I keep reading your publications!”

Diderot gave a modest wave. “And your essay on *Asparagus and the Immortality of the Soul* is still a textbook of mine!”

George turned to Tiburty with a smirk. “And you…”

Tiburty raised a hand. “I get it, I get it. Engineering happens to be slightly less captivating.”

George put a hand on his shoulder. “Still, I love you as if you were normal.”

Tiburty snorted. “Of all the people, you talking about *normality*…”

They all laughed.

And somewhere, just behind them, Borges and Max were rolling in the grass like divine toddlers, wrestling and barking, while the rest of the dogs kept singing *The Best Is Yet to Come* like it was gospel.

And maybe it was.

And then it happened—again.

The chorus began. Soft at first, like a breeze rustling through fur. To the general public, it was just joyous bark and woof, the kind that made mailmen flinch and toddlers squeal. But

for the chosen few—those mad, broken, holy  
fools—it was an aria.

The dogs were serenading them.

Not barking. Not howling. *Singing.*

*People...*

*People who love puppies*

*Are the luckiest people in the world...*

George sat on the grass, arms around Borges  
and Max, glass half full and heart  
overbrimming. Tiburty leaned back against the  
bus, head tilted, listening with an engineer's  
disbelief. Diderot had tears in his eyes. Or gin.  
Or both.

*Be a puppy who needs people*

*Puppies who need people*

*Are the luckiest puppies in the world...*

And there, in that meadow-turned-stage,  
backed by a lake that shimmered like a  
forgotten heaven, the canines crooned in  
perfect canine counterpoint. Wet noses lifted  
skyward. Tails swayed in rhythm.

*With one person*

*One very special person*

*A feeling deep in your soul*

*Says you were half, now you're whole*

*No more hunger and thirst...*

*But first, be a person who needs puppies,*

*People who need puppies*

*Are the luckiest people in the world.*

Silence followed. Brief, profound.

Then Borges farted loudly and everyone fell  
over laughing.

And so there they were.

Three friends. Three scholars. Three minds—or their glorious, wine-soaked ruins—gathered around three martinis. Very dry. No garnish. Ice was frowned upon. Vermouth was a rumor.

They sipped like priests at the altar of mutual derangement, seated on old wooden chairs that had no business still standing, the table between them warping slightly under the weight of forgotten genius and leftover olives.

Around them, paradise.

The dogs woofed the time of their lives—by the lake, on the meadows, among the trees. Some rolled in sun-warmed grass. Some chased imaginary communists. One was serenading a butterfly. Borges attempted to court a fallen pinecone with romantic fervor. Max stole Diderot's sock from his sandal and wore it like a hat.

Time, as a concept, politely excused itself from the scene.

The world, for once, made no demands.

Only the wind had questions, and it was too polite to ask them out loud.

George leaned back, took a slow sip of his martini, and squinted at his old lunatic comrades with that sharp twinkle only true madness achieves.

**“So, my beautiful bastards... what brings you here?”**

Diderot and Tiburty exchanged a look. The kind of look you only exchange after years of shared metaphysics, failed revolutions, and at least one incident involving an inflatable Lenin and a flamethrower.

They turned to George.

“Well, brother... it’s about your wits,” said Tiburty.

“My *what*?”

“Exactly,” Diderot added, smoothing his beard with exaggerated patience. “There was... a **glitch.**”

George blinked.

“In...?”

“In the Internationale.”

“You mean—”

“Yes,” said Tiburty. “The sacred Internationale.”

“The Internationale of Workers,” Diderot confirmed, raising his glass like it was a toast and an exorcism.

George set his drink down slowly, as if afraid it might explode. **“I heard of Pepe. The dogs told me.”**

They all went silent for a moment.

The wind rustled the trees like it, too, was whispering the news.

**Pepe Mujica had died.**

And somehow, inexplicably, metaphysically, *bureaucratically*, George’s wits had gone with him. Or Mujica’s soul had snagged on George’s last working synapse. Or they had glitched into one magnificent spiritual bug in the Workers’ Cloud Server.

Nobody was quite sure. Not even the dogs. Especially not the dogs. And they usually knew everything.

Tiburty and Diderot sat up straighter, the dogs instinctively quieting around them. The lake shimmered. The meadow held its breath.

**“The left-wing forces in the world are losing on all fronts,”** Tiburty said, his voice suddenly carrying the solemnity of a rusting manifesto.

“**And the loss of Pepe,**” Diderot added, eyes distant, “just took another defending bastion away.”

“**But we felt…**” Tiburty frowned, swirling his martini like it held secrets. **“It took *too much.*”**

George narrowed his eyes.

“**More than the loss of a comrade normally would,**” Tiburty continued. **“More than grief. Something *drained.*”**

Diderot nodded. “**Interests, passions, hopes… all escaped. More than naturally expectable. Like air from a punctured zeppelin.**”

And then they said it together, like a ritual phrase spoken under the moon:

“**Your wits, brother.**”

George stared at them.

The silence grew absurd.

Then he exhaled, leaned back, and muttered with the reverence of a man who's seen it all:

“**Well, fuck me sideways and call me Trotsky.**”

A dog barked in agreement.

Another licked his elbow.

Somewhere, a red star flickered in the distance and shrugged.

George blinked at them through the sunlight  
and the gin haze.

“So I’m some sort of Orlando?”

Tiburty raised a finger. “Consider us your  
Astolfo, if you want.”

Diderot nodded. “But we’re not here to give  
your wits back. Leave them with the wind if  
you want.”

Tiburty again: “We’re here for the singularity.”

“The three of us,” Diderot said, leaning in,  
“well... might think better than two.”

George grinned, teeth like an old chessboard.

“Or worse.”

“*That’s the spirit!*”

Tiburty slammed a palm on the wobbly table.

“Innkeeper! More intoxicating beverages, if you will!”

From behind the bar, a long-suffering voice echoed like the final sigh of a socialist bartender who once had dreams of a wine bar in Tuscany:

“Oh for *fuck’s* sake… When George brings his little friends to play…”

A grumble.

A bottle uncorked with theatrical resentment.

A tray full of delirium.

And the dogs, sensing the rising tide of lunacy, began a soft jazz rendition of *Volare*, tails swaying like backup dancers in a cosmic lounge act.

It started—if anything ever truly *starts*—with the death of José “Pepe” Mujica.

To the media, it was a quiet passing. An old revolutionary slipping gently into the night.

But to those attuned to deeper frequencies—the ones just below dog-whistle and just above Marxist ballad—it was a rupture. A cosmic misfire.

“**The Internationale** glitched,” Tiburty said, now with the gravitas of a drunk priest explaining a nuclear diagram using breadsticks.

George sipped his third martini and squinted. “So what? I lost my wits because Pepe kicked the bucket?”

Diderot: “No. You *departed* with him. Or him with you. Or you met halfway through an existential bottleneck.”

Tiburty leaned forward: “We’re calling it *the singularity*.”

George blinked. “Sounds like sci-fi.”

“No,” said Diderot. “Worse. It’s *hope*.”

Tiburty stood, tracing patterns in the air with his olive toothpick. “**You were the last functioning intellect unanchored by ideology. When you blew your last fuse—at precisely the same metaphysical timestamp as Mujica’s death—the Internationale suffered a... vacuum implosion.**”

“**A reverse class war,**” Diderot added. “Where nothing was taken, but everything *leaked*.”

“**Dreams. Ideas. The precise temperature of a well-made negroni.**”

“**A glitch,**” George muttered. “That’s what I am.”

“**No,**” Tiburty said, raising his glass. “**You are the symptom.**”

“The *beautiful symptom*,” Diderot toasted.

“And us?”

Tiburty grinned. “We’re the treatment.”

George raised an eyebrow. “So we’re not restoring my wits?”

“No. Wits are bourgeois,” Diderot said. “We’re here to *replace* the Internationale. From scratch. From drunk. From bark.”

George nodded slowly, eyes misting with the unspoken weight of revolutionary absurdity.

“Well fuck me sideways and call me Rosa Luxemburg.”

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Intermezzo 2, lungo. Con fuoco.

Someone was a communist because they were born in Emilia.

Someone is a communist because they were born in a

coworking space.

Someone is a communist because their grandfather  
fought the Nazis,  
or because their grandfather *was* one, and therapy is  
expensive.

Someone is a communist because they saw Russia as a  
promise.

Now they see it as a bot farm with nukes and shirtless  
horseback.

Someone is a communist because they see China as a  
spreadsheet  
and Cuba as a vintage filter with bad Wi-Fi.

Someone is a communist because they're tired of being  
alone,  
because Tinder ghosted them and capitalism charges  
monthly fees for affection.

Someone is a communist because their Catholic guilt  
mutated  
into eco-anxiety and student debt.

Someone is a communist because Netflix said so,  
because *The White Lotus* made them feel things,

because the theatre demands equity,  
and TikTok told them to read Marx in under 60 seconds.

Someone is a communist because they were told so.

Someone is a communist because they weren't told the rest.

Someone is a communist because before, before,  
before—

they were a libertarian.

Then a nihilist.

Then a UX designer.

Someone is a communist because they realized the system's broken,  
but all they could afford was a Guy Debord tote bag and a reusable straw.

Someone is a communist because Berlinguer was a decent man,

and Elon Musk definitely is not.

Someone is a communist because they're rich but allergic to guilt,  
or poor and allergic to everything but irony.

Someone is a communist because they drink natural  
wine

and cry at farmers' markets.

Because “solidarity” is the last beautiful word they  
haven’t ruined.

Someone is a communist because they’re just too tired  
not to be.

Someone was a communist because their parents voted  
for the Communist Party.

Someone is a communist because their parents vote  
Amazon Prime.

Someone was a communist because they saw the Soviet  
Union as destiny

Someone is a communist because they see the West as a  
pyramid scheme

and the East as a data center with panda mascots.

Someone is a communist because they feel profoundly  
alone

in a world of profiles, algorithms, and read receipts.

Someone is a communist because the only religion left

is the one that taxes you for breathing and makes you log in twice to cry.

Someone is a communist because theatre demands equity,  
cinema demands revolution,  
and Instagram demands... something.  
Nobody's quite sure what, but it filters well.

Someone is a communist because someone on TikTok said Marx was hot.

Someone is a communist because no one ever told them about the gulags.

Someone is a communist because before, before,  
before...  
they were a crypto-bro with a Che Guevara screensaver.

Someone is a communist because Pepe Mujica drove a Beetle  
and Jeff Bezos builds spaceships.

Someone is a communist because they earn €6/hour  
and rent is €1200/month, and they still tip at cafés.

Someone is a communist because they read Gramsci  
and mistook his prison notebooks for a startup guide.

Someone is a communist because they drank natural wine,  
watched *The Battle of Algiers*, and wept at the sight of bread.

Someone is a communist because atheism left them cold  
and God's LinkedIn profile is inactive.  
So they prayed to revolution instead,  
even if it had no miracles—just slogans.

Someone is a communist because they were once  
workers  
or wanted to be  
or swore they'd never again work a job  
that required a badge, a lanyard, and a smile.

Someone is a communist because revolution?

Not today.

Maybe tomorrow.

Definitely the day after if there's not a deadline.

Someone is a communist because  
“the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the class struggle,  
fuck's sake!”

Someone is a communist to piss off their father.

Someone is a communist out of principle.

Someone out of fashion.

Someone out of pure existential spite.

Someone is a communist because they want to  
nationalize joy  
and collectivize hangovers.

Someone is a communist because they mistook  
dialectical materialism  
for the Gospel According to TikTok Marxists.  
And still preferred it.

Someone is a communist because they think  
the working class might still be behind them.  
Or maybe just next to them, at the bus stop, vaping.

Someone is a communist because they want to be  
more communist than others,  
even if they have no idea what that means anymore.

Someone is a communist because there was once  
The Great Communist Party.

Someone is a communist despite the fact there was once  
The Great Communist Party.

Someone is a communist because there's nothing better.  
And because everything worse is already in power.

Someone was a communist because everyone who was  
against something,  
was eventually called *a communist*.

Someone was a communist because they couldn't stand  
it anymore—  
that grimy, bloated, ad-sponsored thing we still dare call  
*democracy*.

Someone, someone thought they were a communist—  
but maybe they were something else.  
Something older. Something unborn.

Someone was a communist because they dreamed of a  
freedom  
that didn't come in debt, drones, or denim.

Someone was a communist because they believed  
they could only be alive and happy  
if everyone else had that same chance too.

Someone was a communist because they needed a push,  
a jolt, a spark toward something unknown.  
Because the morality of this age smelled like profit

and they longed for something stranger, gentler,  
something inconveniently ethical.

Maybe it was just a force. A flight. A dream.

A twitch in the chest.

A desire to change things.

To change *life*.

Someone was a communist because with that desire, that  
absurd momentum—

each person became more than just themselves.

Two people in one:

The daily, tired body that paid bills, answered emails,  
waited in lines—

And the other, wild-eyed, full of bark and beauty,  
belonging to a species  
that wanted to take off and fly  
and, maybe this time,  
change life for real.

---

And then it happened.

All the dogs—every mutt, hound, terrier, shepherd, and glorious mongrel—stopped. Sat. Rose as one. Their tails stiffened. Their ears twitched.

And solemnly, with dignity only canines and martyrs possess, they raised their little *left* paws like fury clenched fists.

And they began to bark. Not wildly. Not for treats.

But with precision. With fury. With faith.

They *barked The Internationale*:

Arise, you prisoners of starvation!

Arise, you wretched of the earth!

For justice thunders condemnation.

A better world's in birth.

No more tradition's chains shall bind us.

Arise, you slaves, no more in thrall!

The earth shall rise on new foundations.

We have been naught, we shall be all.

'Tis the final conflict;

Let each stand in his place.

The international *woofing* class

Shall join the World a place.

George stood. Tiburty stood. Diderot wept into his wine.

Behind them, the bar glowed like a cathedral of beer. The lake shimmered like a banner. The moon itself saluted.

Revolution, it turned out, had paws.

And this was its anthem.

Then, as the last echoes of *The Internationale* faded and the revolutionary pack licked their own armpits in celebration, Tiburty reached into his mysteriously bottomless coat and

produced a tablet. He tapped it awake with the care of a bomb-disposal expert.

**Tiburty:** “Now, let’s see what we’re actually up against.”

He opened *WickedPedia*—the Wikipedia of Evil, tagline: ‘*Citation Needed, Morals Not*’—and cued up a video documentary. The light from the screen flickered across the lakeside, painting the gathered faces in sickly blue.

And the horrors paraded by, one algorithmic freakshow at a time:

- **The right-wing poor**—chanting for tax cuts they’ll never see, while their teeth rattle out Morse code for “Send Help.”
- **The working class defending corporate tax breaks**—cheering for their own layoffs like it’s the Super Bowl.

- **The Republican negro**—campaigning against civil rights while holding a “Juneteenth BBQ” sign in one hand and Clarence Thomas’s autograph in the other.
- **The anti-immigration son of immigrants**—building a wall and then FaceTiming his abuela for the mole recipe.
- **The Catholic LGBT**—confessing to the priest that they enjoy RuPaul and rosary beads, and believing the Pope is just a misunderstood drag queen.
- **The machist woman**—shouting “Make Me a Sandwich!” into her own mirror, then protesting equal pay because it ruins the ‘romance’ of oppression.

The parade grew ever more grotesque.

And finally, the grand finale:

A slow, cinematic fade to a man in a MAGA hat, naked from the waist down, brandishing a hammer.

He proceeds to enthusiastically hammer his own balls, howling in agony and patriotic glee, waving an American flag with the other hand.

On screen, the caption reads:

**“Personal Responsibility.”**

Silence.

George, Tiburty, and Diderot stared at the screen, glasses frozen mid-air.

Diderot: “Well. That explains a lot.”

**George:** “Somewhere, Marx is mainlining morphine and begging for the flood.”

**Tiburty:** “Welcome to the Singularity, comrades. WickedPedia confirms: We’re fucked.”

Just then, from the folds of Diderot’s oversized tweed coat, emerged a creature of whiskers, disdain, and pure contempt distilled into feline form.

**Pascal.**

The cat stretched like a tired monarch forced to witness a peasant revolt, yawned with operatic contempt, and finally spoke—his voice velvet soaked in sarcasm:

**“Definitely too many dogs in this storyline.”**

A hush fell over the lakeside.

Borges froze mid-tail-wag. Max dropped the pinecone he was chewing like a cigar. The dog choir paused their rehearsal of *Bella Ciao*.

**George:** “Pascal! How long have you been—”

**Pascal:** “Since page two. Buried in footnotes and fleas.”

**Tiburty:** “Oh good, now the bourgeois intelligentsia has arrived.”

**Pascal:** “I’m simply here to restore literary balance. This has become less ‘comrade’s struggle’ and more *101 Revolutionary Dalmatians*.”

**Diderot:** “He’s been moody since the bar stopped carrying sardine vermouths.”

**Pascal:** “*That* and the fact the Internationale has devolved into a bark-along.”

He sat atop the table now, tail curling like a Communist moustache.

**Pascal:** “If we’re saving the world, I demand at least *one* subplot involving cats. A coup,

perhaps. Or an elegant sabotage. Preferably involving string theory and string.”

He began grooming himself mid-monologue, because of course he did.

Pascal, freshly disdainful and self-cleaning, had just declared the canine saturation point when Borges padded over.

He was a philosopher-dog, you see. He didn’t just chase sticks—he chased epistemological paradoxes. He had once barked in Latin. Fluently.

He sat across from Pascal, gave him a single respectful nod, and joined the discussion like it was a salon in 1920s Buenos Aires.

**Borges:** “The Right-wing poor. Shall we begin there?”

**Pascal (with a twitch of the tail):** “Class inconsistency in its purest, dumbest form. They use the same oligarchic repertoire that oppressed them—equating poverty with laziness—yet speak it from the basement of the socioeconomic house.”

**Diderot (adjusting his glasses):** “Inequalities are growing, and yet the demand for redistribution is shrinking. The working classes, once the bastion of the left, now chant for their own chains.”

**Tiburty:** “Election campaigns no longer talk about wages, pensions, rights. They’re won over who goes to which bathroom and whether Jesus spoke English.”

**George:** “We used to fight over bread. Now they fight over rainbow flags and the skin color of cartoon characters.”

**Pascal:** “Because identity outshouts hunger. If you say ‘white, Christian, traditionalist’ often enough, a starving man will choose crucifix over bread. Even if both are moldy.”

**Borges:** “Political parties have learned this. No need to offer economic programs. Just feed the people *symbols*.”

**Tiburty:** “Flags. Borders. Fairy tales about golden pasts that never existed.”

**Diderot:** “And the tool of the trade? ‘Spreading stereotypes.’ It’s a strategy. A method. A fucking spreadsheet.”

**Pascal:** “It’s cheap to run, too. Just a few memes, a few dog-whistles, and suddenly your opponent is not ‘a rival’ but ‘an enemy of the people.’”

**Borges:** “It builds cultural tribes. It carves out identity fortresses. And inside those walls, people forget about wages. They vote to protect imaginary legacies.”

**George (draining his glass):** “So the Internationale didn’t glitch. It was hacked.”

A long silence followed. Even the dogs didn’t woof.

Pascal leapt down from the table, paced once, and sat again.

**Pascal:** “So. What do we do?”

**Tiburty (smiling):** “We drink. Then we bark. Then we build.”

**Borges (tail thumping):** “Then we *bite*.”

Just as the council of beast and brain was descending into revolutionary gloom, Max returned—swaggering like a jazz solo, fur a

little messier than usual, grin too wide for anything wholesome.

Beside him walked *her*.

A vision. A whirlwind. A pitbull of impossible beauty and explosive convictions. Muscles like poetry. Eyes like dissent. Voice like a Molotov with lipstick.

**Max:** “Guys, this is—”

**Her (already stepping forward):** “*Stella*. And so, let me get this straight—*again*, the strategy of the left is being decided by a table full of over-educated, aging, heterosexual, white male humans?”

Dead silence.

The birds stopped chirping. Somewhere, a squirrel clutched its nuts in panic.

**Borges (whispering to Max):** “How can one be *too* educated?”

**Max (whispering back, eyes wide):** “*Shhh!* Shush! Or you’ll never hear the end of it. I went out for a quickie and ended up in a two-dog-commune.”

**Pascal (raising one eyebrow with surgical precision):** “Ah. A performative post-binary libertarian with Marxist biceps. Lovely.”

**Stella (glaring at him):** “What’s your contribution to the revolution, Whiskas? Napping in sunbeams and critiquing others?”

**Pascal:** “I destabilize discourse through elegant inaction.”

**Stella:** “I’ll destabilize your litterbox, you colonial relic.”

**George (sotto voce):** “My God. I love her.”

**Diderot (sipping his wine):** “She reminds me of Clara Zetkin, if she had fangs and didn’t give a fuck about your feelings.”

**Tiburty:** “We need her. Or she’ll overthrow us.”

Stella sat—powerfully, decisively—and crossed her paws like a general in heat.

**Stella:** “I’m staying. But if this becomes another circlejerk of nostalgic leftist metaphysics, I’ll form a splinter cell and rename the Internationale *Bitch, Please.*”

**Max (beaming):** “Isn’t she *incredible?*”

**Borges:** “Terrifying.”

**Pascal:** “Horny.”

**George:** “Promoted.”

**Stella stood.**

Not dramatically—just firmly. Like truth had hips and wasn't here to flirt.

And then she *spoke*.

Her voice cut through the lakeside calm like broken glass through silk.

**Stella:**

"You want to know why we're losing?  
Why the right is marching into working-class neighborhoods and walking out with votes like they just won a raffle?

Because *we* are the problem. Not the right. *Us*.  
The so-called progressive camp, with our smug little slogans and PhD-approved virtue signaling.

We talk about the working class like they're a species of endangered bird—majestic, fascinating, but oh god, don't let them speak.

We treat them like idiots.

We say, 'We need immigrants to do the jobs locals are too lazy to do'— and when a local guy says, 'I'm not lazy, I just don't want to be paid like it's 1870,' we call him a racist.

Are you *hearing* yourselves?

Then we tell him his language is inappropriate, his jokes are problematic, his car is killing the planet.

And when he asks, 'Why does my old diesel get taxed more than my boss's fucking Tesla?' we tell him he's a climate denier.

Like some medieval priest shrieking 'Heretic!'

because the peasant questioned the holy book  
of carbon neutrality.

And God forbid he talks about *real* things—

Wages.

Crime.

Regional collapse.

Watching his town rot while the capital throws  
money at rooftop yoga cafés for poodles.

You know what we do?

We shut him up.

‘That’s nationalist.’

‘That’s xenophobic.’

‘That’s fascist.’

The guy just wants to live without drowning—  
and we hand him a dictionary and a fine for  
moral pollution.

Meanwhile the right?

The bastards?

They show up and say, 'Yeah, you're getting screwed. It's *their* fault. Follow me.'

And people do.

Because they'd rather be lied to by someone  
who listens  
than ignored by someone who lectures.

We say we're the party of the people.  
But the people don't feel it.

They feel judged.

They feel scolded.

They feel like they're in a goddamn HR  
seminar  
every time they try to say what's on their  
minds.

We don't offer solidarity—

We offer *correction*.

*Sanitization*.

Sterile empathy.

Like we're petting them through rubber gloves.

And the worst part?

When they turn to the right in desperation,

we act *betrayed*.

We call them stupid.

We say, 'Oh, they'll regret it.'

No.

*We failed them.*

Because we were too busy tweeting about

casting diversity in superhero movies

while ignoring the fact that half the country

can't afford rent.

You want to save the left?

*Shut up.*

*Listen.*

Stop calling pain ‘problematic’  
and start fighting the people who cause it.

Or just admit it—  
we’re not here to win.

We’re here to *perform* goodness  
while the world burns  
and the poor get crushed—  
by *both* sides.”

A silence settled over the lakeside.

Even the wind backed away, apologizing.

**Tiburty (whispering to Diderot and George):**  
*“I feel like Mujica’s pulling my wits too…”*

**Diderot (quietly):**  
“She’s not wrong.”

**George:**

“I think she just bit history in the ass and made it apologize.”

**Pascal (grooming himself with faint respect):**

“Well. That escalated deliciously.”

**Max (beaming):**

“Right? I just wanted a quickie.”

Tiburty suddenly froze. His eyes glazed over—not in the usual gin-drenched way, but in that dangerous, *engineer-sees-the-matrix* kind of way.

He stared at Stella. Not at her muscles. Not at her bite. Not even at her ideology.

**Tiburty (rapt, reverent):**

“*Who are you?*”

The others paused mid-sip, mid-lick, mid-smolder.

**George:** “What the hell, John?”

**Diderot:** “She just vaporized our collective egos  
and you’re having an existential zoom-in?”

**Max:** “Please don’t be my ex.”

**Stella:** *[classic dog head tilt]*

Tiburty stepped forward. Eyes sharp now.  
Engineer-sharp. Not the messy-brilliant chaos  
he normally wore like a bathrobe.

**Tiburty (lower voice):**

“Your accent.”

Stella blinked.

**Tiburty:**

“*Punta Carretas.*”

It hit like a dropped piano.

Stella flinched—just subtly—but unmistakably.  
Her body tensed. Instinctively, she let out a

deep, involuntary **grrrr**. A primal note of something hidden.

Then, realizing, she swallowed it—shakily transforming it into an unconvincing **yelp**, like a dog pretending to have stepped on a thorn.

Too late.

Everyone stared.

**George (quietly):** “Punta Carretas... wasn’t that the old prison in Montevideo?”

**Diderot:** “The one Mujica escaped from.”

**Borges (whispering):** “I thought she smelled of yerba mate and revolution...”

**Pascal:** “She smells of secrets. Delightfully terrifying ones.”

Stella’s eyes scanned them. Rapid. Calculating. Feral.

But the mask was cracked.

**Tiburty (gently, solemnly):**

“Mujica… During his years in confinement, when he couldn’t hear, or speak, or read… much of his mind left him.”

The air thickened like old smoke in a revolutionary bar.

**Tiburty (continuing):**

“You… you’re a *piece* of that mind. And when he went…”

**Stella (softly, almost fondly):**

“I sent him a present. A beautiful present. The wits of a lovely genius who, faced with *oh so smart*, or *oh so pleasant*, chose pleasant.”

**Everyone else:** “...”

Only Tiburty smiled.

A big, broken, beautiful smile.

The kind of smile that happens when the math *finally* makes emotional sense.

**Stella (grinning now):**

“Also—we, the dogs, *all* wanted a Puppy Bus driver!”

**George (lifting his martini):**

“*Best* wits ever lost!”

**Diderot (frowning):**

“But what you gave… wasn’t *yours* to take. You seized a means of production. *Mental* production.”

**George:**

“Wait… is *that* a communist thing?”

**Tiburty (shaking his head, delighted):**

“No. It is not.

It is well-meant, heartfelt *common theft*.

Hence the glitch.

The hiccup of the Internationale.

The Singularity.”

**Stella (smirking, drawing it out):**

“Weeeeeell… teechniiiiicallllyyyy…”

And then—

**Max:**

“*Bless the Singularity if it made me meet her.*”

Diderot (rising, dramatic, robe-like jacket  
flaring as if this were a stage at the Sorbonne):

“*Damn you, Tiburty! You saw it first!*”

Tiburty gave a low, theatrical bow, the kind  
done by men who know they’re right *and*  
unbearably smug about it.

**George (mid-sip):**

“What did he see? I’m always two toasts  
behind.”

Diderot (pointing at Stella like she's both patient and bomb):

“*The justification*, George! The break!  
The final fracture between the working class  
and left-wing thought!”

**George:**

“Still not tracking. Please explain like I've had three martinis and a singing retriever licked my frontal lobe.”

**Diderot:**

“Stella did what the *right* has accused us of all along—drum after drum, headline after headline:

The liberals take what *isn't* theirs for their own benefit.”

**He turned back to Stella, tone both wounded and awed.**

“For all your truth, all your passion…

you took George's wits—*unwillingly*, yes—but it was still appropriation.”

**George (blinking):**

“You’re saying I got *liberated*?”

**Diderot:**

“For as well-intended as it was, Stella’s gesture *broke something*.

Something old. Something precious.

The *union* of the workers of all the world… cracked.”

**Tiburty (quietly):**

“The Internationale… glitched.”

**Diderot:**

“All that Stella said, all that detachment from the people she exposed—*it already leaked*.

And now? The right wing is watching.

Listening.

*Confirming our weakness.*

And adjusting their strategies *right now.*"

A heavy silence.

The kind that usually precedes coups.

**Stella (ears back, tail flicking nervously):**

*"Whoops... I didn't see that coming."*

**Pascal (deadpan, licking one paw):**

"Well, that backfired quickly."

**Max:**

"I still love her."

**George:**

"And I still have no wits, so honestly, this is the best soap opera I've ever starred in."

**Max (tail twitching, ears perked):**

"Hey—wait a second—why is *my girlfriend* responsible for—"

**Stella (eyes narrowing):**

“*Your* girlfriend?”

**Max (instantly sweating despite lack of sweat glands):**

“I mean—I—are w—no?... I mean... I thought... we sniffed and everything...”

**Stella (grinning):**

“We are, *silly*. I'm *messing* with you.”

**Max (growling softly):**

“*Grrrr.*” (*lovingly*)

**Pascal (rolling his eyes):**

“Because she's an *idea*, you furry moron. Ah, love... does this to all creatures. Even theoretical constructs.”

**Stella and Max (in unison):**

“*What?*”

Borges (voice calm, like a philosophy professor at the edge of an epiphany):

“She’s *real*, with us. No doubt. But she was *created*—forged out of a piece of mind. A piece of Mujica’s mind… that left him. And made her. Henceforth… *an idea*.”

Diderot (nods gravely):

“And if an idea does a wrong—however innocent, however well-intended—it becomes… an *ideal wrong*.”

Pascal (tail swishing like a guillotine):

“She disappointed the unity of the workers. The international commitment. The Internationale itself. She disappointed it… *ideally*.”

Silence.

The kind where only existential dread and tree frogs remain.

**Max (turning to Stella, mock-serious):**

“Dude, you sure know how to make a mess.”

**Stella (narrowing her eyes again):**

“*Don’t ‘dude’ me.*”

**Max (instantly):**

“Yes ma’am.”

**Pascal:**

“You want to understand why Stella’s *well-meant* theft shook the Internationale while entire ministries on the right can collapse in orgies of theft, fraud, and industrial corruption without even raising a collective eyebrow?”

**(He licks his paw. Dramatic pause. Nobody interrupts.)**

“Because *morality*, my underfed Marxists, is *asymmetrical*. It’s theatrical. It’s brand-driven.”

“When the *left* sins—when it lies, steals, cheats, or simply acts human—it causes a *scandal*. A betrayal. A collapse in trust. Because the left is marketed, believed, *required* to be the honest, pure-hearted faction. The noble schoolteacher of history. The doctor in the waiting room of justice.”

“Their voters punish them. Their enemies mock them. And worst of all, *they punish themselves*.”

(He swipes at a gnat. The gnat evaporates in shame.)

“But when the *right* sins? Nobody’s shocked. Nobody’s disillusioned. The public shrugs like they just watched a raccoon knock over a trash

can. That's what raccoons do. That's what the right *is*."

**George (half-under his breath):**

"Raccoons with stock options."

**Pascal (not missing a beat):**

"Nixon didn't fall because he did wrong. He fell because he got *caught*.

And no one was *surprised*. It was merely inconvenient."

**Tiburty:**

"While Clinton..."

**Pascal:**

"Yep. Clinton went down because he *denied* a blowjob. Not for the act—but for the lie. And because the left is expected to have *dignity*, to be *better*, to hold itself accountable. His mistake wasn't his zipper—it was his *hypocrisy*."

**Stella (narrowing eyes):**

“So you’re saying I disappointed them more... because I was supposed to be one of the good guys?”

**Pascal:**

“No, darling. I’m saying you disappointed them because you *were*.

And the righteous have no margin for error.”

**Borges:**

“So the right sins and thrives, while the left must never stumble.”

**Pascal (stretching luxuriously):**

“Welcome to the political theatre.

The villains are allowed monologues.

**Tiburty (softly, almost reverently):**

“Someone was a communist because Enrico Berlinguer was a decent man.”

George (staring into the bottom of his martini like it's a crystal ball):

“Ah yes… and remember those *imaginations*, comrades?”

(He stands, arms spreading wide like a prophet with a hangover.)

“*Junoesque*, bountiful comrades of the feminine persuasion, heroically steering *colossal tractors* across endless seas of golden wheat— plowing not just the fields, but the *decadent past* itself—”

(The dogs howl a little in musical accompaniment.)

“Marching forth, engines roaring, *bosoms proud*, lips chapped by the revolutionary wind, cheeks aglow with Party-approved blush,

toward the *Radiant Sun of the Glorious Tomorrow!*"

(Thunderous sarcastic applause from Pascal. Borges barks in rhythm. Max wipes a tear of confused arousal.)

**Diderot:**

"You forgot the bandana. There's *always* a red bandana."

**Stella (rolling her eyes but smirking):**

"Let me guess—the tractors had names like *Lenina, Collectiva*, or *Big Red Mama*?"

**George (nodding solemnly):**

"*Lenina the Unplowed.*"

**Pascal:**

"That was also the name of a failed French erotoco-Marxist film from 1978."

**Tiburty (smiling with pain):**

“And yet, despite the absurdity… we *believed* it.

We were children of that image.

Raised by posters, pamphlets, and baritone anthems echoing through echo chambers.”

**Stella:**

“And now?”

**George:**

“Now we’re in a lakeside bar full of singing dogs,  
a philosophical cat, a pitbull idea,  
and a glitching Internationale held together by  
gin and sarcasm.”

**Max:**

“Best timeline ever.”

Diderot (his voice low, with the weight only  
memory can carry):

“Remember that autumn day?  
Late October afternoon, the sky already  
darkening—  
college exams ahead, but minds adrift,  
days lost to idleness, and those scraps of  
youthful nonsense we mistook for life.”

He paused.

The dogs quieted. Even Pascal stopped licking  
himself.

Diderot (continuing):

“And then the news. It hit like a punch. A *real*  
one.

Not ideological. Not poetic.

*Guevara was dead.*

Somewhere in Bolivia, betrayed, cornered, and

shot—

Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara was *gone*.”

**George (softly):**

“The books dimmed. The room darkened.

Because with him… a part of our hope had  
died too.”

**Tiburty (leaning back, eyes far away):**

“Those were enchanted years...

Times of sung myths and raging protests,  
when days were spent in cafes and classrooms,  
arguing, dreaming, weaving illusions  
with hands still soft and minds still loud.”

**George:**

“Guevara was dead, yes—

but each of us clung to the belief that his  
*thoughts*, his *fire*,  
somehow still burned within us.

That they marched on, through us, into the world.”

**Stella (tilting her head, half-whispering to Max):**

“…How *old* are they?”

**Max, Borges, and Pascal (in perfect deadpan unison):**

“*Very.*”

**Borges (nostalgic but smug):**

“Any man who is not a socialist at age 20 has no heart.

Any man who is still a socialist at age 40 has no head.”

**Pascal (without even looking up):**

“Nice bullshit that Churchill never said.”

**Borges:**

“Did I say anything about *Churchill?*”

Pascal (twisting tail, licking paw):

“Touché. Still bullshit.”

Tiburty (voice suddenly poetic, like a vodka-soaked Rimbaud):

“At twenty, everything still feels whole.

Because at twenty, everything is—who can say what?

At twenty, you’re truly foolish.

So many lies buzzing in your head at that age.”

Diderot (gazing off, like a man watching his younger self disappear into a protest):

“Leaving home at twenty is almost a rule,  
almost a duty—

The joy of meeting people in clusters,

Sharing identical ideals, confusing *being* with *having*.

That great crowd calls to you—

With songs and colors, it shouts, and it  
marches forward.”

**George (breaking the nostalgia like a  
champagne bottle on a bicycle):**

“And the *weed!* Let’s not forget the *weed!*”

**Diderot (smiling like a wizard who’s been  
waiting decades):**

“Did someone say *edibles?*”

(He reaches into the folds of his vast coat and  
pulls out a small ziplock bag full of suspiciously  
cheerful-looking gummies.)

**All (like a revolutionary boy band):**

“*YYEEAAAHH!*”

**Stella:**

“Is this… leftist praxis?”

**Max:**

“It’s called collective bargaining, baby.”

**Pascal (sighing):**

“Well. If the Internationale is going to collapse,  
at least let it do so *baked out of its mind*”

**Then followed the HIGHTERNATIONALE.**

Time bent.

Reality folded itself into a tiny accordion and  
started playing a very off-key version of  
*L'Internationale* on a kazoo.

**SCENE:**

All of them. Around the bar’s patio table.

Paws and feet. Martinis and water bowls.

Pascal now wearing a monocle made from a  
bottle cap.

Stella staring very intently at a plastic flamingo.

**George (eyes wide, staring into the wood grain  
of the table):**

“Guys... this table has a *topography*.

Like... like a miniature Marxist utopia. Look!  
There's a hill where the bourgeoisie is hiding!"

**Max (poking his own nose with deep concern):**  
"Why... does it beep when I press it?"

**Pascal (swaying slightly, muttering):**  
"Cats are *vibrating anarchists*... I knew it... I  
*am* the means of production... purr means  
*power.*"

**Borges (barking in slow motion):**  
"WOOF...MEANS...SHAREHOLDER  
DISSENT."

**Stella (to the flamingo):**  
"Comrade. You've been too quiet.  
Are you with us or the poultry-industrial  
complex?"

**Tiburty (staring at his own hands like they're  
ancient scrolls):**

“I’ve decoded myself... I’m... I’m binary... I’m 01001000IGH.”

**Diderot (laughing so hard he’s vibrating like a microwave on legs):**

“You fools! You simple fools!

*We’ve broken through!*

The edibles were encoded with THE TRUTH!”

**George (half weeping, half delighted):**

“Guys... guys... my wits? They’re crawling back!

They’re riding tiny motorcycles made of *ethics!*”

**Max (crawling under the table):**

“Shh. I’m unionizing ants. They deserve weekends.”

**MONTAGE:**

- Borges giving a TED Talk to a line of ducks.
- Pascal licking a mirror and demanding equal representation for his reflection.
- Stella leading a group of dogs in synchronized howling set to *Bohemian Rhapsody*.
- Diderot and Tiburty drawing the New Internationale on napkins, but it turns out to just be a large penis made of co-ops.

### Night falls.

Everyone is lying on the ground, staring at the stars, which are now definitely spelling out slogans like *EAT THE RICH* and *UNIONIZE NEPTUNE*.

**Stella (sleepy):**

“Was that... a meeting?”

**Pascal (curling up on George’s chest):**

“More like... a hallucinated council of the absurd.”

**George:**

“I vote we do it again.”

**All:**

“AYE.”

**Next Morning:**

Birds chirp. Dogs snore. George is face-down in a flowerbed whispering *“Redistribute the pollen...”*

But something’s changed.

A *purpose* hangs in the air. The revolution has a hangover, yes—but also a *plan-shaped void* in its soul.

Tiburty (standing heroically on a picnic bench, his lab coat flapping like a cape in a gentle fart of wind):

“Comrades! Friends! Furred and flawed! The time has come!”

Everyone stirs. Borges yawns. Stella stretches like a goddess waking from a dream of conquest. Pascal glares because it's morning.

Tiburty (pointing dramatically at the horizon):  
“Diderot… *lead the way!*”

Diderot (rubbing his temples, still wearing a napkin on his head like a failed turban):  
“Gladfully! Where to?”

Tiburty (blink):

“…That's what *you* should know.”

Diderot (blinking harder):  
“Why *me*? ”

Tiburty (hands on hips, beaming like a man

who just passed the buck with elegance):

“You’re the philosopher.

The *bearer of knowledge*.

The cartographer of truth,

the sommelier of ethics,

the guy who keeps quoting Kant at urinals.”

Diderot:

“That was one time.”

Pascal:

“No, it was *several*.”

Stella (tilting her head):

“Wait. So we’re all fired up, ready to go... and

we don’t actually know *where* we’re going?”

Max (already wagging):

“Sounds like a *great* plan!”

**George (picking daisies from his beard):**

“As long as there’s a bar along the way.”

**Tiburty (nods solemnly):**

“Every road is a good one when you’re fleeing collapse.”

**Pascal (grumbling):**

“Wonderful. Existential tourism with four-legged fanatics and an ex-philosopher without GPS.”

**Diderot (muttering):**

“Fine. Give me ten minutes. And a croissant. I’ll locate the revolution.”

The moment was tense. Existential. Lightly flaky.

**Diderot (squinting into the void):**

“I cannot lead a revolution on an empty stomach. I require—”

And suddenly, from nowhere, as if handed down by Marx himself during a bottomless brunch in Elysium…

**A croissant appeared.**

Warm. Golden. Steaming slightly.

No one saw who gave it to him.

No one dared ask.

**George (whispering):**

“Was it… divine intervention?”

**Pascal (sniffing):**

“Buttery intervention. Definitely imported.”

**Borges (sniffing reverently):**

“Smells of justice. And laminated pastry.”

**Diderot (holding it aloft like the Holy Grail of Gluten):**

“With this croissant… I shall locate the Revolution!”

**Stella (muttering):**

“I swear to Dog if he reads crumbs like tea  
leaves…”

**Diderot (breaking it in half):**

“Observe! The layers! The folds of historical  
dialectic!”

(He dramatically pulls apart the flaky center.)

**Diderot:**

“The center is hollow—*like neoliberal  
promises!*

The edges? Crisp—*like class tension!*

And the taste…” (*he bites, chews, eyes rolling  
slightly*)

“Sweet… with a hint of vengeance.”

**Tiburty (eyes wide):**

“So where *is* the revolution, oh croissant  
whisperer?”

**Diderot (savoring the last bite):**

“It lies... to the south.

Past the supermarket that only sells quinoa and  
sadness.

Beyond the yoga commune built on ancestral  
burial grounds.

Somewhere between the forgotten industrial  
towns and the last mechanic who still accepts  
cash.

*There... it waits.”*

**George:**

“That’s awfully specific.”

**Max (sniffing the air):**

“Do they have snacks there?”

**Stella:**

“They better have *reparations*.”

**Pascal:**

“They better have espresso.”

Tiburty (raising his voice, arms, and general vibe):

“Then it is decided! We march!

Not because we know what we’re doing—  
but because we *have a direction*  
and just enough croissant-based metaphysics  
to pretend it’s meaningful!”

All:

“ *YYEESSSS!?*”

And so the ragged, righteous, ridiculous pack  
of rebels set off—led by a philosopher with  
crumbs on his beard, a pitbull idea with  
revolution in her eyes, a cat who never  
consented to any of this, and the most pleasant  
man to ever lose his mind.

The revolution had a location.

And it was flaky as hell.

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### Intermezzo 3: lungo. Grazioso.

She was a walking hedge fund in Balenciaga sneakers. An American socialite born in a Manhattan penthouse with views so high they looked down on the clouds *and* the people. She had never known a single thing that wasn't gold-leafed, tax-avoided, or brand-endorsed.

Old money. Serious money. Not vulgar tech-rich. Not suburban crypto-slut. Generational, inherited, dividend-driven wealth. Think oil barons, shipping tycoons, private equity, and some perfectly timed arms deals her great-great-grandfather signed with Franco.

She was in Liguria for “authentic European vibes” and Instagram backdrops. “I want wine that’s *rustic*, not priced. I want to be seen with *normal* people, like peasants with hats. It’s cute.” Her outfit—a linen-cashmere blend tailored for “Mediterranean street chic”—cost \$3,000 and would wrinkle at the mere whisper of wind.

She turned a corner in a narrow alley—*carruggio*, as her brief Airbnb Experience had taught her—carefully

stepping over a puddle that could have been water, wine, or medieval blood. She paused to take a selfie. The sun hit just right. She captioned it, “#ligurianlowkey #humbleluxury #paganvibes.”

Then it happened.

Her limited edition sneaker caught an ancient, cracked cobblestone—hand-laid sometime before Columbus had testicles. She stumbled. Hands flailed. Phone went flying. Her \$800 sunglasses launched off like capitalist shrapnel. She tripped forward, in slow, dramatic, gravity-defying silence—

—and slammed headfirst through an old wooden door, the kind you think is decorative but isn’t. The door swung open violently with a crash, and she somersaulted—legs in air, skirt over face—into a smoke-filled room of red banners, socialist slogans, and confused silence.

**She had landed, upside-down, in the weekly meeting of the Ligurian Chapter of the Italian Communist Party.**

The local secretary, a wiry man with nicotine-stained teeth and a hammer-and-sickle tattoo that looked

suspiciously infected, stared. An elderly ex-partisan crossed himself. Someone dropped a salami.

She blinked from her position on the floor, legs splayed in chaos, her Gucci bag having exploded nearby like a piñata of capitalism. She looked up at the stony faces and cracked:

“Is this… a wine tasting?”

*General alarm!*

“*UNA BORGHESUCCIA!*” shouted the treasurer, a wiry woman who looked like she’d fought Mussolini personally—possibly with her teeth.

“*UNA CAPITALISTA!*”

“*LA REAZIONE È TRA NOI!*”

Cries rose like a worker’s chorus sung over a burning barricade.

Somewhere, a siren howled. Or maybe it was just a very upset accordion player.

An ancient **WWII Sten gun** was yanked from beneath the bar. It still had a sticker from when it was used to defend the Arsenale in 1944. The man holding it—*Comrade*

*Gianni*, 94, blind in one eye, always angry—waved it like a priest waves incense during high liturgy.

“*LA LOTTA CONTINUA!*” he yelled, aiming roughly in the direction of her Hermès belt.

A **pineapple grenade** was slammed onto the table by a man whose name was probably *Tonino*, who wore overalls, had never smiled since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and kept muttering “*We were so close in '77…*”

A **nonno**, white of beard and red of rage, rose from his chair. He lifted a **hammer in one hand and a sickle in the other**, forming a perfect X above his bald, liver-spotted head. His body trembled—not from age, but from the intoxicating aroma of righteous class vengeance.

The young woman, now upright but white as a luxury bedsheet, tried to raise her hands in a gesture of surrender, but her gold bracelets clinked together like bourgeois wind chimes.

She looked at them.

They looked at her.

She *gulped*.

*Dry.*

And with that terrifying clarity only fear can bring, she squeaked:

“...I recycle?”

A stunned silence. Even the grenade guy hesitated.

The tension could have sliced parmesan. Every creaky finger hovered near a trigger, or worse—a *Marxist pamphlet*. Salami quivered. Che Guevara stared down from the wall in black-and-white judgment.

And then—*like a revolution within the revolution*—he stepped forward.

A young man. Her age. Maybe a year older. Maybe a life wiser.

He wore a **red handkerchief** tied rakishly at the neck, a worn **Basque beret** tilted just so, over a mop of curls that had *definitely* marched in a protest and kissed in the rain. His shirt was unbuttoned at the top, sleeves rolled, forearms inked with tattoos of broken chains, a red star, and—oddly—Frida Kahlo riding a tank.

He walked through the room like a breeze of reason in a forest fire of retired guerrilla fantasies.

“**Nonni**…” he said gently but firmly, lifting his palms.

“**Via le armi. How many times have we talked about this?**” He turned slightly toward the Sten gun.

“**First we ask, *then* we pull the weapons. That’s the order. Always the order.**”

The nonni grumbled, shuffling back, one by one. The grenade was reluctantly returned to someone’s coat pocket. The Sten gun was lowered, though not unloaded. The hammer and sickle settled back onto the table with the weight of historical disappointment.

He turned to her.

Offered a hand.

She stared.

Took it.

He pulled her up, his grip firm, calloused, honest. She felt a tingle—a very inconvenient, very proletarian tingle.

He looked her in the eye.

“Are you alright?”

She nodded, still processing his jawline. “Yes. I—I tripped.”

He smiled. “You fell. *Into history.* Happens.”

She blinked. “Where am I?”

He glanced around at the red banners, portraits of Gramsci and Pertini, the Soviet-style mural of factory workers topless for some reason.

He shrugged.

“**You’re in the beating heart of the people. Or as TripAdvisor calls it: Cantina Comunista, 2.5 stars.**”

The tension broke like stale focaccia. The nonni, though still suspicious, lowered their weapons, their eyebrows, and their revolutionary pulse.

Sure, they despised **everything** about her.

The **attire**—tailored, imported, absurdly “effortless”—cost more than the resale value of a Fiat Panda with new tires and working windows.

Her **hair**—so glossy, so unnaturally symmetrical—looked

like it had been shined with tears of underpaid Moroccan children and a salon light ring.

But…

This was Italy.

**Old-school chivalry**—that strange, ancient virus caught from Roman emperors, Dante, and the 1950s—**has no political party**.

A nonno cleared his throat with the gravity of a Marxist liturgy.

“**Un bicchiere di vino, signorina?**” he asked, already halfway to the bottle.

Another pulled a wooden chair—squeaking and noble. “**Venga, si segga.**” His voice, both commanding and tender, like someone used to telling donkeys what to do.

A third, with one eyebrow that seemed permanently in the shape of Stalin’s moustache, pushed a cracked ceramic plate toward her.

“**Provi le olive. Fatte da mia moglie. Morta da cinque anni, ma le olive sono come vive.**”

She sat, hesitantly.

Her \$500 pantsuit made an audible *capitalist squeak* against the chair's rough wood.

The wine was poured. Red. Deep. Militant.

She took a sip.

It was… good. *Too* good. Her ancestors in their country club crypts shifted uneasily.

“It's… rustic,” she whispered, not knowing if it was a compliment or a cry for help.

The young man with the red handkerchief smiled, sat beside her.

“Careful,” he said. “That's the good stuff. Made from grapes grown in collective resistance and aged in passive-aggressive barrels.”

She smiled back, olive in hand.

*And for the first time in her life, she wondered if she had been rich all wrong.*

---

*And so they boldly go.*

*Not quietly. Not rationally.*

*But with music, barking, pastry crumbs, and  
the certainty of a cause only half-understood  
but wholly felt.*

*They go.*

*Toward the Radiant Sun of the Glorious  
Tomorrow™.*

*That mythic horizon promised in pamphlets  
and pub arguments.*

*Where the tractors never break down, the  
unions sing in tune, and no one ever gets  
evicted for having bad credit and good politics.*

*They go.*

*To the place where the workers of all the world  
unite—*

*if not in factories, then in WhatsApp groups  
and shouted slogans over cheap beer.*

*They go.*

*To find the glitch in the Internationale.*

*The wrinkle.*

*The bug.*

*The thing that made hope stutter and solidarity  
crash like a poorly-coded app.*

*To find it.*

*And—somehow—un glitch it.*

*Probably by shouting.*

*Possibly by singing.*

*Maybe by licking it and seeing if it tastes  
bourgeois.*

*They have no plan.*

*Just a direction.*

*A bus.*

*A barking anthem.*

*And each other.*

*Diderot with his croissant crumbs of truth.*

*Tiburty, equal parts scientist and lunatic prophet.*

*George, the most pleasant ex-genius to ever drink the Internationale on the rocks.*

*Stella, a dog forged of fire, rage, and precise ideology.*

*Max, who just wanted a quickie and ended up in a moving commune.*

*Pascal, begrudgingly dignified, sharpening claws on dialectics.*

*Borges, philosopher of fur and fury.*

*And somewhere ahead—  
in a town where lies are honest, and ideals wear  
name tags—  
the noumenon of the left awaits.*

*They will find it.*

*They will fix it.*

*Or they will break everything trying.*

*And so, flying on the wings of the eternal class struggle, barking a symphony of justice and flatulence, they arrived.*

*Mount Proletarius* rose beyond the clouds of ideology and the neoliberal fog that smells vaguely of overpriced skincare. A summit of reinforced concrete and collective will. The resolved contradiction made stone. A mountain that does not exist, yet is too necessary not to.

*This is not a place.*

*This is a dialectical kiss between the Real and the Ideal.*

*The noumenon of the Internationale.*

*The orgasmic synthesis of thesis and anti-thesis, minus the cleanup.*

*At its **base** lies the **Valley of Permanent Revolution,***

*where mornings begin with wildcat strikes  
and end with redistributed pastries served with  
black-market espresso.*

*Down its slopes flows the **Red Cascade**—  
not of blood, but of **tomato-based solidarity stew,***

*spiced with chili, dialectics, and the tears of  
centrists.*

*The **Fifth Internationale Gardens** bloom in  
seasonally just, historically inevitable  
symmetry.*

*They banned avocados.*

*This is serious.*

*The **Tower of Praxis** rises like an anxious  
erection of hope,  
built with nothing but scaffolding, class*

*consciousness, and mutual distrust.*

*It constantly reshapes itself through auto-critique—*

*today it's Brutalist, tomorrow it's Eco-Feminist with solar panels and sarcasm.*

*In the **Grand Assembly Hall**,*

*a thousand voices shout at once, and yet decisions are resolved through folk music, wine, and long, awkward silences filled with meaning.*

*The **Museum of Failed Revolutions** stands*

*proudly,*

*curated by historians in Che slippers and Marx onesies.*

*It serves black coffee—no sugar, no hope.*

*The exhibits are interactive and profoundly disappointing.*

*Here dwell the **Ghosts of Revolutionaries Past**.*

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- *Marx* teaches seminars titled *Alienation: It's Not You, It's Capitalism.*
- *Lenin* hosts *How to Seize Power and Alienate Everyone* every Thursday.
- *Rosa Luxemburg* DJs *Das Kapital After Dark*—a techno night with interpretive reading.

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*Unicorns of Free Healthcare gallop past Phoenixes of Free Education.*

*All animals are equal—except economists, who have been exiled to the Department of Eternal Spreadsheet Correction.*

*A choir of unionized sirens sings the Internationale in perfect harmony, luring hedge fund managers to their doom, or worse, to eternal subcommittee meetings on post-marxist symbolic hygiene.*

*Each day begins with an oath:*

---

1. *Destroy the bourgeoisie.*
2. *Do some light gardening.*
3. *Pet a comrade.*
4. *Never cross a picket line—even metaphorically.*

---

*Property is theft,*

*so everyone steals from themselves in a spirit of mutual respect.*

*Religion is the opiate of the masses,*

*though communal Mass is still celebrated—if interpreted dialectically and rotated among all genders and species.*

---

*There are no roads.*

*Only the Great Dialectic Escalator,  
which ascends and descends simultaneously,  
powered by contradiction, worker rage, and  
solar panels stolen from Elon Musk's roof.*

*Those not pure enough?*

*They slide into the Gulag of Nuance,  
where Trotskyists and Tankies bicker for  
eternity,  
stabbing each other with footnotes.*

*To enter Mount Proletarius, one must:*

---

- *Have read something. Even a meme.*
- *Reject meritocracy, but still secretly  
crave a gold star.*
- *Agree to abolish money—but just after  
the next paycheck clears.*

- *Laugh at themselves. Then question whether laughter is revolutionary.*

---

*This is Mount Proletarius:*

*Where the air is pure,  
the vodka is unrationed,  
the Internationale is sung in five-part harmony  
by sentient raccoons,  
and the eternal struggle has finally unionized  
metaphysics.*

*The revolution has a zip code now.  
It just refuses to give it to Amazon.*

*And so, at long last, the Puppy Bus—wheezing  
with revolutionary fervor and faintly smelling  
of biscuits and collective action—rolled off the  
Celestial Highway of Class Struggle, indicator  
blinking with proletarian urgency.*

*With a final, dramatic sputter, it parked in the  
cobbled heart of the Square of Seizing the  
Means of Mass Productions.*

*Around them, socialist doves cooed in  
dialectical minor key. A bust of Engels served  
as a functioning espresso machine. A bronze  
Rosa Luxemburg held a plaque that read:  
"Push Left to Cross."*

*George pulled the handbrake with theatrical  
flair, finishing his martini mid-motion.*

*"Ladies, comrades, and barking philosophers...  
we've arrived."*

*The doors hissed open.*

*They stepped down.*

*Diderot, notebook under arm, sniffed the air.  
"Smells like purpose. And unwashed activism."*

*Tibury squinted at the monumental signage:*

*Welcome to Mount Proletarius –  
Where History Is Still Being Written,  
But We’re Open to Edits.*

*Stella hopped off, tail high. “Let’s find the  
glitch and stab it with a redistribution request  
form.”*

*Max followed, looking around like a tourist in  
Marx’s wet dream. “Do they have snacks that  
are also manifestos?”*

*Pascal descended with feline disdain, surveyed  
the square, and muttered:  
“Nothing’s worse than architecture that tries to  
be metaphor.”*

*Borges, noble, head high, surveyed the  
assembled revolutionary infrastructure: the  
escalators of contradiction, the tofu-leninist  
food court, the Anti-Fascist Dog Park.*

*He barked once. The sound echoed like a call  
to action, or at least a well-timed sitcom intro.*

*They stood together now.*

*In the Square of Seizing the Means of Mass  
Productions.*

*Where every factory bell sounds like a  
marching song.*

*Where pamphlets fall from the sky like snow.*

*Where even the pigeons vote in local  
committees.*

*Here, the glitch in the Internationale hid.*

*Somewhere deep in the algorithms of collective  
longing.*

*Somewhere under the spreadsheets of failed  
utopias.*

*Somewhere between a folk song and a  
manifesto.*

*George (hands on hips):*

*“Alright. Let’s find it. Fix it. Or at least argue about it until someone cries.”*

*Diderot:*

*“Or until someone agrees by mistake.”*

*The Puppy Bus, finally silent, sat like a loyal beast awaiting further orders.*

*The revolution had parked.*

*The quest—for the glitch, for the soul of the Internationale, for justice, or possibly snacks—had begun.*

*Tiburty (again, arms thrown up, exasperated):*

*“Diderot, lead the goddamn way now?”*

*Diderot (stepping forward, eyes slightly wild, croissant-crumbbed, and radiant with doom):*

*“Okay. Fine.*

*Find a glitch in a **noumenon**.*

That's like finding the **collapse of metaphysics**. Which means we are all exquisitely, irrevocably **screwed**."

He adjusts his coat, takes a breath, and launches into it like a man possessed by Kant, Borges, and mild paranoia.

"A noumenon, in **Kantian lingo**, is the **thing-in-itself**—the pure, unfiltered reality that exists independently of our perception, concepts, or favorite Instagram filters.

It is not something we *experience* directly.

We only ever get **phenomena**—the **runway version** of reality.

Reality in makeup. Reality with a PR team.

Reality after passing through customs and your brain's baggage carousel.

**So. Can a noumenon glitch?**

Strictly speaking? **No.**

Because a **glitch** is a hiccup in experience.

A **phenomenal** malfunction.

A typo in the subtitles of being.

But.

*But.*

If a noumenon *accidentally* glitched…

That would mean that **foundational reality**  
**itself**—the very bedrock of what-is—  
tripped over its own shoelaces.

It would be like **God sneezing** during creation  
and accidentally inventing *Belgium*.

A glitch in the noumenon is not like your  
phone freezing.

It's like **finding a typo** in the laws of being.

A metaphysical error 404.

A **crack in the backstage**, causing the front of  
house to strobe.

The world would continue,

but *slightly off-beat*.

Like the Big Bang's choreography hit a bad note.

A jazz solo gone wrong—played by a saxophone that just remembered it has **free will**.”

He stops. Dead still. The wind hushes. The dogs cock their heads. Stella raises an eyebrow. Pascal stares, halfway between murder and mild respect.

Diderot (quietly now):

“In conclusion:

A glitch in the noumenon is the moment where **existence itself blushes**.

We call it **reality**.”

George:

“Holy shit. That was hot.”

**Tiburty:**

“Alright. That’s our mission then.”

**Pascal (groaning):**

“Fantastic. We’re trying to seduce a blush out of reality itself.”

**Stella (grinning):**

“Let’s go slap the noumenon.”

**Pascal (perched atop a crumbling Lenin-shaped bollard, eyes narrowed, tail flicking with surgical scorn):**

“*You wanna see the reality of the left?* Look over there—  
by the roasting **arrosticini** and **salsicce**.”

They turned.

Beyond the sacred geometry of Mount Proletarius, nestled in a remote, weed-choked football field where goalposts leaned like

defeated comrades, stood the last living relic of  
a dream fermented in red wine and quietly  
expired in white-collar shame: the **Festa**  
**dell'Unità**.

A few scattered plastic tables, scorched  
sausages, bad karaoke from a man who once  
ran for city council in 1983.

A communist aunt in orthopedic sandals  
handing out flyers that hadn't been updated  
since Berlinguer's speech was still relevant.

Red banners faded to pink. Wine that had  
survived more ideological shifts than the party.  
And smoke. Always smoke—of meat, of  
memory, of decline.

**Pascal (voice dripping with elegant venom):**

“This isn't just nostalgia.  
It's an archaeological site with grill marks.”

And then he began, like a cursed historian  
who's seen too much:

“The story of the Italian Left is the tale of a  
**steady evaporation**—

not just of ideology, but of *spine*.

A political lobotomy carried out in slow motion  
over half a century.”

### 19474 — The PCI.

A titan. A giant, muscular creature forged in  
the crucible of Resistance. **Born in fire.**

**Baptized in anti-fascist blood.**

It didn't just fight. It *built*.

Newspapers. Cooperatives. Summer camps  
with revolution-themed volleyball.

It could stare down both the Vatican *and*  
Washington with the same unblinking glare.

### 1991 — The PDS.

The *Bolognina turn*.

Where “communism” became a swear word in its own house.

Better to be “social democrats.” Scandinavian. Hygienic. Bland.

The **hammer and sickle** went underground, replaced by focus groups and color palettes.

### 1998 — The DS.

A glorious Frankenstein of ex-communists, soft Catholics, and liberals with ironic scarves.

"Social" was now too *sweaty*. Too *working-class*.

"Reformist" became the new holy word—best pronounced while eating quinoa.

### 2007 — The PD.

Ah, the **final exorcism**.

A name so soulless it could be mistaken for a broadband provider.

The word “**left**” gone. Evaporated. Like job

security.

Now it was led by ex-communists who shop at  
Eataly,

and technocrats who believe class conflict is  
something you pay extra for on trains.

“What’s left,” Pascal hissed,  
“is a zombified brand addicted to *third-wayism*,  
terrified of looking poor,  
allergic to labor,  
and fluent only in PowerPoint.”

“They wag their fingers at working-class anger  
and call it *populism*,  
while sipping **prosecco** in **rooftop bars** named  
after Pasolini.”

“The PCI was born in *fire*.  
The PD was born in *air conditioning*.”

He paused.

The wind blew through faded red banners like  
a whisper of what could have been.

A band started playing *Bella Ciao*, off-key and  
off-tempo.

**Pascal (quietly, eyes on the grill smoke rising  
like a ghost):**

“And that’s how the Italian left died.

Not with a bang.

Not even with a whimper.

But with a goddamn *PowerPoint*.”

**George:**

“…Do they have *wine*, though?”

**Pascal:**

“Of course.

Even ghosts drink.”

---

**Intermezzo 4: molto lungo. Andante con brio.**

It is a typical Italian Sunday lunch in the countryside. The table is a battlefield of love and cholesterol: antipasti already gone, lasagna steaming, wine breathing in a bottle older than the guests, and **Nonna** swatting flies with the serenity of a pope.

**Nonno**, on the other hand, is fuming.

“**Dio sgranato can!**” he bellows, stabbing a fork into his polpette like it’s Mussolini’s last testicle. “*Guardali! Look at these two pagliacci.*”

At the other end of the table sit his **grandson, Luca**, and Luca’s friend, **Eliah**—a gender-fluid vegan TikToker from Milan who wears eyeliner like it’s a human right and drinks something green from a thermos.

“*È tè matcha, nonno. Fa bene.*” Luca dares to explain.

“*Matcha? Miccia? Ma vaffanculo!*” Nonno slams his hand on the table so hard the parmigiana trembles.

“And look at what they’ve done to the prosciutto! *Hanno tolto il grasso!* They cut off the fat! **THE BEST PART!**”

He grabs the discarded trimmings from their plates with trembling hands, like a museum curator rescuing fragments of a lost Botticelli.

“I didn’t shoot fascists in the balls so you could mutilate pork and drink *piss al clorofilla!* When I was your age I was eating bread soaked in Chianti and stabbing Germans with rusty forks!”

Nonna, calm as a storm’s eye, tops up her wine.  
“Leave them be, caro. The boy has sensitive digestion.”

“Sensitive digestion? I had *shrapnel* in my colon and still ate tripe on Tuesdays!”

Eliah, wide-eyed, smiles politely. “I’m gluten-free.”

Nonno looks at him like he just confessed to murdering Caravaggio.

You know those weird, almost cosmic silences? One second there’s the usual background hum—forks clinking, chairs screeching, someone complaining about the Wi-Fi, a baby crying somewhere just to make a point—and then *boom*, absolute stillness. Like the universe hit pause, just long enough for everyone to hear the precise, moronic thing tumbling out of your mouth.

Maybe you were mid-sentence saying something like,  
“And that’s why I think pigeons should wear tiny pants,”  
and that’s the *exact* moment when the gods of social  
embarrassment decide: yes, now. Let’s remove all sound  
from the world *except* that.

It happened just that.

“*…and Mussolini also did good things,*” Eliah chirps,  
buttering a slice of gluten-free pane azzimo. “*He made  
the trains run on time, no?*”

Time itself freezes.

Even the fan above stops mid-spin, like it wants no part  
in this.

**Nonno** goes silent—deadly silent, the kind of silence that  
precedes divine wrath or a category 5 stroke. His eyelid  
twitches. His mustache bristles with fascist-detecting  
fury. Then, like a hell-forged wind-up toy, he grabs the  
**coltello da prosciutto**—the long, thin sacred blade that is  
used exclusively for slicing cured meat and avenging  
history.

He stands up.

**“IL CAZZO CHE LI FACEVA ANDARE IN ORARIO!”**

And lunges across the table like a seventy-five-year-old jaguar with arthritis and unfinished business.

The tip of the knife gleams.

Eliah doesn’t even react—he thinks it’s performance art.

**Mamma** screams.

**Nonna** doesn’t flinch. She simply sets down her wine glass and grabs Nonno’s belt loop with one hand, the way she used to pull him away from bar fights in 1953.

**Papà, Zio Carmine**, and the **three Cousins**—Antonio, Pino, and that weirdo Gabriele who paints miniatures for Warhammer—leap on Nonno like rugby forwards in linen shirts.

It takes six of them to restrain him.

Meanwhile, **Luca**, already halfway under the table, grabs Eliah by the elbow.

“**RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!**” Papà bellows, clutching Nonno’s torso as the old man thrashes and spits out names of fallen partisans.

Outside, chickens scatter. A cat screeches.

Luca and Eliah tear through the vineyard like cursed

pilgrims.

From behind them, the voice of Nonno, shaking with rage, pierces the summer sky:

“LA RESISTENZA NON È MORTA, STRONZI!”

The family pile-on doesn't hold.

With a twist of his hip and a barbaric growl that echoes from the deepest cellars of anti-fascist rage, **Nonno** *shakes off seven family members like flies from a horse's ass.*

Zio Carmine lands in the lasagna.

Gabriele crashes into the radiator, miniature orcs spilling from his shirt.

Papà rolls under the table, winded and whispering prayers to *Pertini*.

Then—ominous silence.

Nonno storms off down the stairs.

Everyone freezes.

**Mamma** gasps. “*Oh no…*”

**Nonna**, still sipping wine, nods solemnly. “*Sta andando giù. In cantina.*”

A beat of dread.

Then, from the depths below: the *metallic clank* of a long-forgotten latch. A creaking chest. The distinct, unmistakable *click* of cold, oiled steel.

Footsteps.

Heavy. Purposeful. Vengeful.

**Nonno emerges**, dirt and cobwebs clinging to his cardigan, holding a **WWII British Sten gun** like it's **Pentecost and he's the Holy Spirit with a submachine gun**.

The light hits him.

Wrinkled. Proud. Mad.

**“Qualcuno oggi mangia PIOMBO.”**

Eliah, peeking from behind a lemon tree, squeals.

“Is that… is that a *vintage* weapon?”

Luca: “HE'S GOING TO VINTAGE YOU TO DEATH!”

Nonno lifts the Sten. Finger already halfway to the trigger.

“*Gli faceva andare in orario, eh?* I'll show you *timetable precision*, coglione!”

**Nonna** sighs, pulling her phone out.

*“Pronto, Don Nicola? Sì, è successo di nuovo. Porta l’ostia e il Valium.”*

The tension is electric. The vineyard rustles as if history itself is shifting.

Luca and Eliah are halfway to the chapel, panting like cats in heat and flinging fig leaves behind them as makeshift camouflage. Eliah is live-streaming with shaky hands:

“So here I am, hiding in rural fascist Italy—if I don’t make it, tell my followers *I was murdered for facts.*”

Back at the house…

**Nonno** stands in the middle of the courtyard, Sten gun raised like Moses about to part the Red Sea with 9mm rounds.

The chickens scatter again.

**Nonna** is unfazed, stirring the polenta with one hand and dialing emergency numbers with the other.

Then—

A distant bell chimes.

**Enter: DON NICOLA.**

Riding a dented Fiat Panda like it's the Popemobile of the Apocalypse, he skids to a stop in a cloud of dust and incense.

He kicks open the door.

Red cassock flapping.

Beard wild as Tolstoy.

Beretta in one hand.

Two WWII pinecone grenades tucked into his rosary belt.

**“DOVE SONO I FASCISTI?!”**

**Nonna**, without turning from the polenta:

“Oh *Don Nicola*, not *you* too...”

Don Nicola kisses his crucifix and cocks the gun.

“I made a vow to Christ *and* Gramsci! You call me when there are fascists, I BRING THE REDEMPTION!”

Then—

The sound of a bell again.

Not church bells this time.

**The Sindaco.**

Mayor of the town.

Rides in on a rusted *Bianchi* bicycle, wearing his sash, his helmet, and—God help us—a **Napoleonic cavalry sword** strapped across his back.

**“NON SCORDETEVI DI ME!”** he yells, riding directly into a wine barrel.

*“I’m going along!”*

The family, watching from the porch, collectively facepalms.

**Papà** mutters: “This is why we don’t vote in this town.”

**Nonna** points her spoon toward the street, shouting over the chaos:

“Can someone please go save the influencer before he becomes *hashtag martyr?*”

**In the cemetery**, old **Signor Bellini**, the town’s sculptor, dusts off a slab of Carrara marble and starts carving:

*Here lies Eliah*

*Who spoke well of Mussolini*

*In front of Nonno Giovanni*  
*May God forgive his stupidity*

High atop the **bell tower**, perched behind pigeons and panic, **Elijah** clutches his phone like it's a rosary. His face is streaked with eyeliner, olive oil, and pure existential horror.

He begins to film.

“Hey guys. Update. Uh... okay, maybe... maybe Mussolini wasn’t that nice, after all. Like, Albania? Why? Greece? They had feta. That’s not war-worthy. I think—wait, hold on—”

A distant **crack** cuts the sentence in half.

Then:

**BOOOOOONG**

The **bell** explodes with a hollow death toll as **Nonno**, from the courtyard below, lets off a round directly into its bronze undercarriage.

It tolls not for Mussolini, but for **two Gen-Z ears**, thousands of TikTok viewers, and half the **Val d’Orcia**. Birds take off.

Grapes fall from vines.

Eliah drops his phone. It bounces once, twice, then plummets to its shattered doom beside the **Madonna statue.**

Down below, **Nonno** reloads like Rambo meets Rossellini.

Inside the church, **Don Nicola** yanks the pin from a grenade with his teeth and shouts a prayer to Saint Giuseppe Moscati and **Antonio Gramsci**.

But before he can launch any divine justice—

**The Sindaco** bursts through the nave like **Don Quixote with a pension plan.**

His sword raised.

His sash fluttering.

His bicycle helmet crooked like an iron halo.

**“DOVE SONO I TRADITORI?!”**

**Don Nicola**, gun still in one hand, grenade in the other, points with his chin toward the left.

**“A sinistra, cazzo! The bell tower! The stairwell’s on the left!”**

The **Sindaco** skids, crashes into a pew, somersaults forward, and finds the stairs.

He begins his climb like Garibaldi storming the Alps.

Up in the tower, **Luca** whimpers.

“Why couldn’t you just say you liked Mambo Italiano like a normal person?!”

Eliah, blood rushing from his ears, responds:

“I thought your **Nonno** was... like... symbolically anti-fascist!”

**“HE HAS A KILL COUNT!”**

The bell swings once more.

It tolls again.

For Eliah.

For the algorithm.

For Europe.

Just when all hope seems lost—when **Nonno** is polishing bullets with memories of Monte Cassino, the **Sindaco** is halfway up the tower quoting Garibaldi mid-asthma attack, and **Don Nicola** is debating whether throwing a

grenade inside a consecrated building technically counts  
as a second baptism—

A sigh echoes from the **edge of town**.

Low. Tired. Smoky with Marlboros and centuries of  
dealing with testosterone-induced disasters.

**Madama Rosaria**, matron of the **Casa delle Rose**  
**Appassite**—the local bordello—closes her ledger.  
Her girls—six in fishnets, two in rubber, one inexplicably  
dressed as Napoleon—gather around.

She exhales through her nose.

“All right girls... it’s on us today. We’re not giving, we’re  
**distributing.**”

The music of revolution begins—not with drums, but  
with heels on cobblestones.

**Down the hill they march.**

A glorious procession of painted lips, jingling earrings,  
lingerie under protest trench coats, all led by **Rosaria**  
herself in high heels and a fur stolen from a fascist  
colonel in 1944.

“**GRATIS!**” she announces to the bewildered town.  
“Today, FREE SERVICE for EVERYONE. Special  
service for anti-fascists. And for fascists... we'll slap you  
until you scream *Bella Ciao* in your sleep.”

Everything halts.

**Nonno** lowers the Sten.

His aim wavers.

His pupils dilate.

“...Rosaria?”

She winks. “*Gio', you still like the thing with the feather  
and the marching band?*”

**Don Nicola**, now weeping, falls to his knees.

“*The sacred and the profane... they are one!*”

The **Sindaco**, halfway up the stairs, peeks down through  
the window.

His sword clatters to the ground.

He's crying too.

“*This is what unity looks like.*”

**Eliah**, dazed, whispers:

“Are they... sex workers? *Unionized* sex workers?”

**Luca** nods.

“Yes. And they’ve just saved your dumbass.”

Within minutes, the square is full of **joy, redemption, and improvised triage massage therapy.**

The grenades are holstered.

The Sten is kissed and locked away.

A goat is milked in celebration for reasons no one questions.

Even **Nonna** finally smiles.

She stirs her polenta once more and mutters:

“*Tutti gli uomini sono uguali davanti a Dio e alle tette.*”

The sun sets golden over the Tuscan hills.

The church bells ring one last time—not in alarm, not in fury, but in **lazy, satisfied harmony**, like a burp after a five-course meal.

In the **piazza**, tables overflow with food.

**Tarallucci** in baskets.

**Damigiane** of wine being passed around like holy relics.

Someone plays a battered accordion. Someone else slaps someone else's thigh in a gesture of universal peace.

**Eliah**, bandaged behind the ear, eyes still twitching from residual fascist PTSD, slips away quietly.

No more TikToks. No more “facts.”

No goodbye.

Just a whisper in the wind:

“I will never speak of this again.”

He vanishes down the gravel road, hitchhiking toward a place with kombucha and book clubs.

Back in the square, **Luca** sits on a hay bale.

Makeup gone.

Checkered shirt crisp.

Straw hat perched.

He lifts the **damigiana** and drinks straight from the spout like Dionysus on a budget.

He lets out a satisfied “ahh” and waves to Rosaria’s girls like long-lost cousins.

**Nonno**, finally calm, plays cards with Don Nicola and the Sindaco.

They cheat openly.

They laugh.

The Sten is nowhere in sight—replaced by a bowl of olives and mutual trauma healing.

And from her post by the kitchen window, **Nonna** watches it all.

She smiles.

She sips her wine.

And says to no one in particular:

**“Sono ragazzi… cosa ci vuoi fare?”**

The wind carries her words across the vineyard.

And all is well again in town.

**Fine.**

*(In tarallucci e vino, as every Italian saga must.)*

---

**Diderot**, arms folded, eyes reflecting the flickering grill flames, stood like a philosopher at a funeral.

**Diderot:**

“Well, as said… a glitch in the *noumenon* is—

*reality.*

And there we have it.”

He gestured toward the **Festa dell’Unità**,  
to the sagging canopies, the dog-eared flyers,  
the once-mighty banners now fluttering like  
laundry on a tired line.

This was the dream, translated—misprinted—  
into existence.

This was **the glitch**.

**Tiburty (voice cracking, almost human):**

“Holy shit.

What have we done?

What have we… *allowed* to happen?”

He sat down heavily on a bench held together  
by rust and dialectics.

**George (softly, holding a paper cup of €1 red  
wine):**

“What *could* we do?  
We watched it fade, piece by piece.  
We debated, theorized, footnoted it to death.”

He sipped. It was vinegar. It was history.

**Borges (tail still, eyes burning):**

“There is *always* something to do.”

Silence.

Even the grill smoke paused.

**Borges (stepping forward):**

“Reality is not fixed. Not even this.

The glitch exists *because* the noumenon passed  
through us crooked.

But it can pass again.

Through us *better*.”

He looked to Stella.

To George.

To Tiburty.

To Pascal, who raised one eyebrow with radical indifference.

**Borges (louder now):**

“Nothing is beyond repair.

The Internationale can glitch.

But so can *we*.

Glitch forward.

Glitch upward.

Glitch *back*.

Correct the path—not by nostalgia, not by branding,

but by being *foolish* enough to try again.”

**Stella (quietly):**

“…Even here?”

**Diderot:**

“Especially here.”

They stood now.

On the cracked concrete of a football field once  
filled with firebrands and now filled with  
folding chairs.

This was the heart of the glitch.

And perhaps also, the place to start the patch.

**Max:**

“Wait… this pre-dates what my girlfr—”

*(glances at Stella, who gives the faintest  
approving nod, warm and revolutionarily  
seductive)*

“—pre-dates what my GIRLFRIEND did.”

*(he says it louder, prouder, like someone just  
gifted him both love and historical materialism  
in one sniffable package)*

“…Taking George’s wits to Mujica while he  
was travelling to the Undiscovered Country.”

Diderot (*grinning like an Enlightenment cat  
caught in the dialectical cream*):

“Correct, my furry friend in love.

(Ah, *juvenile communist activist love*—so pure, so paradigmatic, so deeply annotated in the footnotes of the revolution).

But what we are looking at—

(*gestures grandly toward the field of roasting arrosticini and post-ideological stupor*)

—**is reality.**

The **phenomenon**.

And we… we are in the **noumenon**.

The phenomenon doesn’t touch the noumenon.

But now… look.

*It’s leaking in.*

Reality is invading the idea.”

**Tiburty** (*solemn, with the cadence of a man quoting himself*):

“Throwing a wrench in the turning gears.”

**Pascal** (*licking his paw and giving side-eye*):

“Nice engineering metaphor, Professor.”

**Tiburty** (*mock-humble bow*):

“Just an analogy. A humble bourgeois tool used to describe proletarian breakdowns.”

**Pascal** (*tail twitching with Socratic menace*):

“So, what do you propose…

gentlemen…

and gentle **canine lady**?”

They all look at **Stella**.

She exhales slowly.

The kind of exhale that once overthrew empires or at least defunded a couple of banks.

**Stella:**

“I propose we do the one thing no left-wing committee, no progressive NGO, no online debate forum has done in the last forty years.”

**George:**

“What’s that?”

**Stella:**

“We act.”

*(Pause. Meat sizzling. Minds turning. The noumenon stirs.)*

---

**Intermezzo 5: corto ma non molto. Adagio senza brio, doloroso.**

The social democracy doesn’t go chasing butterflies.

The enemy marches ahead of you—and also behind.

The enemy walks with feet inside your very shoes.

So even if you don’t see the footprints,

he’s always on your side—just not in the way you’d like.

The social democracy is a headless monster.

The social democracy is a rooster without a crest.

What a fog, what a mess, what a storm wind.

The social democracy is that little man who arrests you.

Social democracy doesn’t go anywhere.

The enemy is always marching at your head—  
but where is the enemy's head,  
if it's the one marching at yours?  
Where is this head that leads the charge?

What a fog. What a mess.

The air smells like a coming storm.

Social democracy is a headless monster.

The enemy, always marching at your head.

But what *is* a head, today?

And what *is* an enemy?

What *is* a march, anymore?

And what even *is* a war?

We're already marching,  
here in this sacred peace,  
wearing Sunday uniforms,  
with no enemies, no boots—  
and above all,  
no head.

A man with a megaphone stands on top of a red bus.

He looks like a Christ escaped from the Togni Circus.

He begins his speech with these words:  
“Clear the streets of dreams.”

Clear the streets of dreams—  
they're bulky, useless, alive.  
Rats and garbage will be arrested.  
We will decentralize the cheese and the archives.

Clear the streets of dreams  
so we can store them more efficiently.  
In return, we'll provide photocopies of checks,  
a coin purse, a fake diploma,  
and a briefcase.

Clear the streets of dreams—  
and join the police.  
There will be a need for participation,  
and this is how you can contribute  
to our vision of democracy.

Clear the streets of dreams,  
and keep paying rent.  
Any bastard who has other needs  
shall be struck down  
by my immense benevolence.

From today, masturbation is forbidden.  
The Lambro and the Lambrusco, dressed in black,  
will open unemployment rolls  
and close the cemetery registers.

And then—  
then we will build great hospitals.  
The carabinieri will be more gentle.  
Compulsory, lifelong healthcare for all.  
And better meals in our prisons.

Clear the streets of dreams.  
Give us your words.  
Make sure you're not caught making love in secret.  
Let the criminals be bathed in sunlight.

---

The book ends here.

Dear reader,  
**Hypocrite lecteur, — mon semblable, — mon frère,**  
did you really think we'd hand you the solution  
to the collapse of the left, neatly wrapped in  
recycled paper and revolutionary rhetoric?

No.

That would be neoliberalism with better fonts.

We are **just** characters.

Scrawled into existence by a deranged author  
high on dialectics and red wine.

We cannot save you.

We cannot save anything.

We bark, meow, smoke, rant, make love, throw  
croissants at the noumenon and piss on  
statues, but in the end—

**You** must get in the making now.

**You act.**

You weld back the broken chains.

The Internationale will be sung again, but only  
if **you** write the next verse.

We're only signposts.

Glitchy, stubborn, furry, contradictory, grumpy,  
half-drunk **pointers**.

Yours truly,

*Borges*

*Max*

*Pascal*

*Stella*

*George Belltower*

*Alvaro Diderot*

*John Tiburty*

*…and all the ghostly comrades howling across  
the wind of history*

Reader, it's your turn now.

Don't fuck it up.

When the death of José Mujica causes a metaphysical glitch in the Workers' Cloud Server, a drunken ex-philosopher, a singing bus full of revolutionary dogs, a sarcastic cat, and a pitbull forged from leftover Marxist ideals must fix the Internationale—armed with nothing but croissants, martinis, and righteous barking.

It's *Waiting for Godot* meets *Animal Farm*—on edibles.

Reality has glitched. The Left has lost the plot. And only a Puppy Bus can save us now.

*George's Wits* is a hallucinatory elegy and an unruly celebration—a love letter to the fractured, furious, magnificent tradition of the Left. Through satire as sharp as it is affectionate, it navigates the wreckage of revolutions past and the absurdities of present politics, holding close the belief that something worth saving still stirs beneath the ruins.

Lyrical, feral, and unexpectedly tender, this is not a book of answers, but of echoes—of voices that refuse to be quieted, dreams that refuse to die, and laughter that, despite everything, still knows where to aim.

“ “Borges meets Marx meets a pissed-off pitbull. A masterpiece of philosophical comedy.”

— *Il Manifesto*

“If the Internationale could giggle, it would sound like this.”

— *Le Monde*

“It's not a novel. It's a glorious bark in the face of apathy.”

— *O Estado de S. Paulo*

“Equal parts revolution and ridiculousness. We recommend it, but we don't understand it.”

— *Financial Times*

“If you've ever tried to unionize a hallucination, this book gets you.”

— *Jacobin*